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IR - Roger Hilsau

SUBJUCT: Moscon Summons Coochs on Castin Aid

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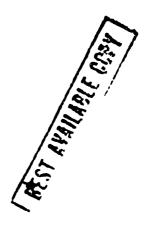
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

TO: The Secretary

Nov 1, 1962

THROUGH:

FROM:

S/S

INR - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT: Moscow Summons Czechs on Castro Aid

There top Czech leaders, including Party Boss Novotny, made an unexpected, whirlwind visit to Moscow on October 29-31 -- the first high-level bloc delegation in the USSR since the beginning of the Cuban crisis. They are said to have had "a comprehensive exchange of opinion on acute questions of interest to both Parties" with the Soviet leadership. In the absence of any indications that other pressing problems were involved, the Cuban situation may have been the primary topic of discussion. This was indicated by an announcement from Czech Embassy, Havana, that Prague would give Cuba food, textiles, toys, and other articles worth \$300,000 "as proof of its solidarity." A Czechoslovak delegation is to arrive in Cuba in November to negotiate a 1963 trade agreement.

Czechoslovaks Heavily Committed. The visit appears connected with the long and heavy involvement of the Czechoslovak regime in Cuba. Prague's resources are currently badly overextended, aggravating its other economic difficulties. Gifts of foodstuffs in the face of domestic shortages indicate either rising Soviet pressure or possible Soviet subsidization of Czechoslovak aid.

[Illegible] The importance of the visit is highlighted by the fact that the Czechs met with Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kozlov, and [?]. On each side, top [?] participated. At an October 30

dinner for Novotny virtually the entire Soviet Presidium assembled in an apparent effort to convey the impression of solidarity.